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WHOLE No. 428

HELPS TO THE STUDY OF THE METAMORPHOSES OF OVID

(Continued from page 27)

Rand, Edward Kennard. The Chronology of Ovid's Early Works. The American Journal of Philology 28 (1907), 287-296.

Professor Rand believes that Amores 2.18 is perhaps the most important source for determining the order in which Ovid's early works appeared. Ovid's earliest published work, he thinks, was the first edition of the Amores, in five books. Later, the Amores was re-edited, with the addition of 2.18 (a letter to the poet Aemilius Macer, with whom Ovid travelled much in his youth), and, doubtless, other pieces, in three books. By the time this second edition appeared the Heroides had been completed.

... We cannot infer that he had begun or planned his Art of Love. We may set 11 B. C. as a date later than which it is not probable that the second edition of Amores appeared. This leaves us still a long stretch before the publication of his next work, the De Medicamine Faciei. We know merely that this preceded the Art of Love and that the latter work and the Remedia were published between 1 B. C. and 1 A. D. . . . I do not think it was in his nature to brood long over his creations, or to subject them to the file. Rather, he would toss them off lightly, retaining but not revising whatever pleased him, throwing away whatever did not. If I am right in this inference, it is more natural to place both the inception and the completion of the Art of Love as near as possible to the date when we know the poem was published. If it were begun in 2 B. C., Ovid could easily have finished it in the time thus allowed. Between 11 and 2 B. C. the De Medicamine Faciei was written, but just at what point it is impossible to say. Ovid may well have been occupied with some of those works which are no longer extant. . . . But . . . it is not necessary to assume that Ovid was intensely busy during all periods of his career.

Root, Robert Kilburn. Classical Mythology in Shakespeare, in Yale Studies in English, IX. (Henry Holt and Company, New York, 1903).

Professor Root shows that the bulk of Shakespeare's mythology comes from the Metamorphoses of Ovid. For a notice of the book, see THE CLASSICAL WEEKLY 12. 186-188 (April 28, 1919).

Schevill, Rudolph. Ovid and the Renaissance in Spain. (University of California Press, Berkeley, California, 1913).

This is a very elaborate discussion (268 pages). It was reviewed by Professor Kirby Flower Smith, in The American Journal of Philology 35 (1914), 330-335.

Professor Smith described the book as follows:

The book consists of four chapters: I, Ovid and the Middle Ages; II, Ovid and the beginnings of Rena-

scence Fiction; III, The Metamorphoses retold in Spanish; IV, The General indebtedness to Ovid of the Siglo de Oro. There are also (pp. 234-265) four Appendices—containing respectively a Bibliography, a Mediaeval Spanish version of Ovid, Heroides, 7 (Dido to Aeneas), the Life of Ovid added by Fernán Núñez to his Commentary on Juan de Mena's el Laberinto de Fortuna, and Bustamante's version of the Tale of Pyramus and Thisbe.

Whether the ordinary student would be minded to follow Ovid's influence on Spanish literature or not, he can at least appreciate the following paragraph of Professor Smith's review (331):

But Ovid's characteristic method of telling a story was a matter of special training as well as of decided taste and surpassing genius. His first work was the Amores, and all that he did afterwards springs from it like so many branches from the main trunk of some shapely tree. How and why this was the case is explained if we bear in mind that he was first, last, and always a rhetorician, further, that he had certain strongly marked tastes in the domain of rhetoric itself. It will be remembered that the Elder Seneca, who knew him personally in the Rhetorical Schools of the Augustan Age, says that Ovid hated argument, and therefore that he never declaimed *controversiae* in the school, unless they were *ethicae*, i.e., questions of conduct. It is added, however, that he was especially fond of *suasoriae*. Now, as every classical scholar knows, some of the most famous pieces in the Amores are really *suasoriae*, the Heroides are nothing more nor less than so many *suasoriae* in epistolary form, the Ars Amatoria is one long lesson in the art of suasion. I may add that many of the finest and most characteristic passages in the Metamorphoses are *suasorial*, and that all those passages painting the conflict of warring impulses in the human breast—and here Ovid is excelled by none—are really so many adaptations of the *controversia ethica*. I need not mention the Tristia and the Epistulae ex Ponto. They are all *suasoriae*.

To those to whom Ovid is the supreme story teller—the supreme artist of the short story—the following words will make a full appeal (335):

... And when I consider the form and the content of most of the novels, and tales, and narrative poems that are dealt out to us from day to day, I could wish that, like our forefathers of the Renaissance, we only had wisdom enough to go back to the author of the Metamorphoses, the Amores, the Heroides, the Ars Amatoria, to sit at his feet, and again learn from him as best we may what it is that makes a story immortal and always young.

For a review of Professor Schevill's book, written by Professor Rand, see Classical Philology 9 (1914), 327-329.

Sellar, W. Y. The Roman Poets of the Augustan Age: Horace and the Elegiac Poets, pp. 324-362. (University Press, Oxford, 1892).

This is a posthumous work. The chapter on Ovid represents the notes made by Mr. Sellar for a com-

plete discussion of Ovid. The *Metamorphoses* is treated on pages 314-316.

Allinson, Anne C. E. *Roads from Rome*. (The Macmillan Company, New York, 1913).

In THE CLASSICAL WEEKLY 5.25-26 (October 28, 1911), there was given an abstract of a paper, entitled *A Poet's Toll*, which had been published in The Atlantic Monthly for December, 1910, and was later incorporated in this delightful book (pages 37-71). This paper had to do with Propertius. In *Roads from Rome*, under the caption *A Roman Citizen*, Mrs. Allinson deals with Ovid (107-143).

She begins with a charming description of how Ovid's family—his wife Fabia, his daughter Perilla, his son-in-law Fidus Cornelius, and his grandchild—were all celebrating Ovid's fifty-second birthday. The second part of the paper (118-130) deals with the blow that, at the very moment when all seemed bright for "the chief poet of Rome", as his daughter fondly calls him, came, without warning, in the news that he had been banished to Tomi—driven out from Rome, yes, but an exile? No, he wildly maintains, for he was still *A Roman Citizen*, with his property and his rights, his wife and his daughter. The effect of the blow on Ovid is most skilfully portrayed.

In Part III (130-143) Mrs. Allinson brings us on to a point two years later than the sentence of banishment. At first she invites us to tarry awhile with Ovid in far-off Tomi. Then (134-143) she brings us back to Rome, to Fabia, a descendant of the three hundred and six Fabii who, at the river Cremera, fought for Rome till every one of them was dead, a Fabia schooled by two years of suffering, who had come to understand her husband, herself, and her country all the better for the suffering.

... Had the hard, solitary fight to be brave meant nothing except that she could write her husband stimulating letters and help his child to take up again the joys of youth? She had found and tested powers in herself that were not Ovid's. What meaning was there in her phrase—"The wife of a Roman citizen?" She began to think over Ovid's idea of citizenship. Suddenly she realized, in one of those flashes that illuminate a series of facts long taken for granted, that the time he had shown most emotion over being a citizen was on the night he had left Rome, when he had insisted that he still retained his property and his rights. Before that indeed, on the annual occasions when the Emperor reviewed the equestrian order and he rode on his beautiful horse in the procession, he had always come home in a glow of enthusiasm. But she had often felt vaguely, even then, that the citizen's pride was largely made up of a courtier's devotion to a ruler, the artist's delight in a pageant and the favourite's pleasure in applause in which he had a personal share. That he loved Rome she had never doubted. He loved the external city because it was fair to the eye. He loved Roman life because it was free from all that was rustic, because it gave the prizes to wit and imagination and refinement. The culture of Athens had at last become domiciled in the capital of a world-empire. Ovid's idea of citizenship, Fabia said to herself, was to live, amid the beauties of this capital and in the warmth of imperial and popular favour, freely, easily, joyfully.

Then, on pages 138-143, Mrs. Allinson gives us Fabia's own conception of Roman citizenship.

... What did her country need, save, in manifold forms, which obliterated the barriers of sex, the sacrifice of self, the performance of duty, the choice of courage? The feverish talk of women about their independence had failed to hold her attention. Now a mightier voice, borne from the graves of the dead, trumpeted from the lives of the living, called to her, about <read 'above'?> the warring of her will with sorrow, to be a Roman citizen. She had neither arms nor counsels to give to her country. She could not even give sons born of her body, taught of her spirit. She was a woman alone, she was growing old, she was ungifted. ... But she could offer her victory over herself, and ask her country to take back and use a character hewn and shaped in accordance with its traditions. Her husband's citizenship had become a legal fable. She would take it and weld it with her own, and, content never to know the outcome, lay them both together upon the altar of Rome's immortal Spirit. ...

In the morning her uncle. . . came to see her. He looked keenly into her eyes as she hastened across the wide room to greet him. Then his own eyes flashed and with a sudden glad movement he bent and kissed her hands. "Heart of my heart", he said, "in an exile's house I salute a Roman".

Smith, Kirby Flower, an article entitled *The Poet Ovid*, published originally in the *University of North Carolina Studies in Philology* (1918). The paper may be found also in a volume entitled *Martial the Epigrammatist and Other Essays*, published in 1920, by The Johns Hopkins University Press, under the editorial supervision of Professor W. P. Mustard.

The discussion of the *Metamorphoses* is brief (68-69), but, even so, it contains several expressions that are bound to linger in the memory. One of these is that "the poem may be briefly described as the *Arabian Nights of the Roman World*". Another passage is this (69):

... <The tales> are, each and every one told with the same vividness and simplicity, the same rapidity and dramatic effect, the same marvellous command of all the resources of rhetoric, and, that which reminds us so much of Ariosto at his best, the same endearing touch of irony and whimsical fancy. He is the true story-teller. Whoever the character may be, he understands his motives, sympathizes with them, at least for the time being, and knows how to bring them out. Hence it comes that whether he relates the charming folk-tale of *Pyramus and Thisbe*, or the horrid passion of a *Myrrha* or a *Byblis*, we find the same sympathy, the same gusto, the same truth of nature. I know of no other long poem except the *Odyssey* in which the interest so seldom flags.

C. K.

(To be continued)

THE ORIGIN OF LANGUAGE

One of the oldest, most persistent, most interesting, and most baffling of man's questions about himself and his world is this, How did men begin to speak? Many answers have been made at one time or another by popular or religious myth. Interesting as these are, we shall pass them over, for they have scarcely any point of contact with modern thought. Philosophers too have frequently worked out a more or less complete answer as a sort of corollary or illustration of